

THE
WITTICISMS, ANECDOTES,
JESTS, AND SAYINGS,
OF
DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON,
DURING
THE WHOLE COURSE OF HIS LIFE.
COLLECTED
From BOSWELL, PIOZZI, HAWKINS, BARETTI, BEAUSLERK,
SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS,
And other Friends in the Habits of Intimacy with the Doctor.
AND
A FULL ACCOUNT
OF
Dr. Johnson's Conversation with the King.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A great Number of Jests,

In which the most distinguished Wits of the present Century bore a Part.

By J. MERRY, Esq. of Pembroke College.

By Nature's Gifts ordain'd Mankind to rule,
He, like a Titian, form'd his brilliant School;
And taught congenial Spirits to excel,
While from his Lips impressive Wisdom fell.

COURTENAY.

THE THIRD EDITION, GREATLY IMPROVED.

LONDON:

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WITNESS, ANECDOTES

TESTS AND SAYINGS

OF

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

BY

THE WHOLE COURSE OF HIS LIFE.

BY

JOHN BOWEN, ESQ., M.P., M.A., BARRISTER AT LAW.

THE SECOND EDITION.

As revised by the Author, in the House of Commons, 1804.

AND

A FULL ACCOUNT

OF

DR. JOHNSON'S CONVERSATION WITH THE KING.

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IN WHICH THE MOST INTERESTING PARTS OF THE GREAT GENTLEMAN'S LIFE

BY J. MERRY, ESQ., M.P., BARRISTER AT LAW.

By Memoirs of the Author, and a full account of his life, as given by himself, and by others, in the House of Commons, 1804.

CONTAINS

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LONDON, 1804.

PRINTED FOR S. DAWKINS, ROBIN HOOD COURT.



Price 3 shillings.

JOHNSON'S WITTICISMS.

A Dull country magistrate gave Johnson a long tedious account of his exercising his criminal jurisdiction, the result of which was his having sentenced four convicts to transportation. Johnson, in an agony of impatience to get rid of such a companion, exclaimed, "I heartily wish, Sir, that I were a fifth."

JOHNSON having argued for some time with a pertinacious gentleman; his opponent, who had talked in a very puzzling manner, happened to say, "I don't understand you, Sir:" upon which Johnson observed, "Sir, I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding."

Sir Joshua Reynolds having said that he took the altitude of a man's taste by his stories and his wit, and of his understanding by the remarks which he repeated; being always sure that he must be a weak man who quotes common things with an emphasis as if they were oracles—Johnson agreed with him; and Sir Joshua having also observed that the real character of a man was found out by his amusements—*Johnson*. "Yes, Sir; no man is a hypocrite in his pleasures."

The wife of one of his acquaintance had fraudulently made a purse to herself out of her husband's fortune. Feeling a proper compunction in her last moments, she confessed how much she had secreted; but, before she could tell where it was placed, she was seized with a convulsive fit and expired. Her husband said, he was more hurt by her want of confidence in him, than by the loss of his money. "I told him (said Johnson) that he should console himself; for *perhaps* the money might be found, and he was *sure* that his wife was gone."

JOHNSON was present when a tragedy was read, in which there occurred this line:

"Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free."

The company having admired it much, "I cannot agree with you (said Johnson): it might as well be said,

"Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat."

The difference, Johnson observed, between a well-bred and an ill-bred man is this: One immediately attracts your liking, the other your aversion. You love the one till you find reason to hate him; you hate the other till you find reason to love him.

Though he had no taste for painting, he admired much the manner in which Sir Joshua Reynolds treated of his art, in his "Discourses to the Royal Academy." He observed of a passage one day, "I think I might as well have said this myself." And once when Mr. Langton was sitting by him, he read one of them very eagerly, and expressed himself thus: "Very well, Master Reynolds; very well, indeed. But it will not be understood."

A popish physician imagined that Johnson had animadverted on his wearing a fine coat, and mentioned it to him. "I did not notice you," was his answer. "Sir, (said Johnson) had you been dipt in Pactolus, I should not have noticed you."

Talking of a very respectable author, he told a curious circumstance in his life to a large company; it was, that he had married a printer's devil. *Reynolds*. "A printer's devil, Sir! Why, I thought a printer's devil was a creature with a black face and in rags." *Johnson*. "Yes, Sir. But I suppose, he had her faced washed, and put clean cloaths on her. (Then looking very serious, and very earnest) And she did not disgrace him—the woman had a bottom of good sense." The word *bottom* thus introduced, was so ludicrous, when contrasted with his gravity, that most of the company could not forbear tittering and laughing, while Miss Hannah More slyly hid her face behind a lady's

lady's back who sat on the same settle with her. His pride could not bear that any expression of his should excite ridicule, when he did not intend it; he therefore resolved to assume and exercise despotic power, glanced sternly around, and called out in a strong tone, "Where's the merriment?" Then collecting himself, and looking awful, to make them feel how he could impose restraint, and as it were searching his mind for a still more ludicrous word, he slowly pronounced, "I say the woman was fundamentally sensible."

At Mr. Thrales, one evening, he repeated his usual paradoxical declamation against action in public speaking. "Action can have no effect upon reasonable minds. It may augment noise, but it never can enforce argument. If you speak to a dog, you use action; you hold up your hand thus, because he is a brute; and in proportion as men are removed from brutes, action will have the less influence upon them." "What then, Sir, (said Mrs. Thrale) becomes of Demosthene's saying? "Action, action, action!" "Demosthenes, Madam, spoke to an assembly of brutes; to a barbarous people."

Talking one day of the danger of marrying pretty women, Johnson said, "It is a very foolish resolution to resolve not to marry a pretty woman. Beauty is of itself very estimable. No, Sir, I would prefer a pretty woman, unless there are objections to her. A pretty woman may be foolish; a pretty woman may be wicked; a pretty woman may not like me. But there is no such danger in marrying a pretty woman as is apprehended; she will not be persecuted if she does not invite persecution. A pretty woman, if she has a mind to be wicked, can find a readier way than another; and that is all."

Lord Chesterfield being mentioned, Johnson remarked, that almost all of that celebrated Nobleman's witty sayings were puns. He however allowed the merit of good wit to his Lordship's saying of Lord Tyrawley and himself, when both very old and infirm: "Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years; but we don't choose to have it known."

It was a very remarkable circumstance about Johnson, whom shallow observers have supposed to have been ignorant of the world, that very few men had seen greater variety of characters; and none could observe them better, as was evident from the strong, yet nice portraits which he often drew. Mr. Boswell frequently thought that if he had made out what the French call *une catalogue raisonnee* of all the people who had passed under his observation, it would have afforded a very rich fund of instruction and entertainment. The suddenness with which his accounts of some of them started out in conversation, was not less pleasing than surprising. "It is wonderful, Sir, said he to Mr. B. "what is to be found in London. The most literary conversation that I ever enjoyed, was at the table of Jack Ellis, a money-scrivener behind the Royal-Exchange, with whom I at one period used to dine generally once a week."

Volumes would be required to contain a list of his numerous and various acquaintance, none of whom he ever forgot; and could describe and discriminate them all with precision and vivacity. He associated with persons the most widely different in manners, abilities, rank, and accomplishments. He was at once the companion of the brilliant Colonel Forrester of the guards, who wrote "The Polite Philosopher," and of the awkward and uncouth Robert Levett; of Lord Thurlow, and Mr. Sastres, the Italian master; and has dined one day with the beautiful, gay, and fascinating Lady Craven*, and the next with good Mrs. Gardiner the tallow-charidler, on Snow-hill.

He played off his wit against Scotland one evening with a good humoured pleasantry, which gave Mr. Boswell, though no bigot to national prejudices, an opportunity for a little contest with him; and having said that England was obliged to his countrymen for gardeners, almost all their good gardeners being Scotchmen—*Johnson*. "Why, Sir, that is because gardening is much

* Lord Macartney, who with his other distinguished qualities, is remarkable also for an elegant pleasantry, told Mr. Boswell, that he met Johnson at Lady Craven's, and that he seemed jealous of any interference; "So (said his Lordship, smiling,) I kept back."

more necessary amongst you than with us, which makes so many of your people learn it. It is all gardening with you. Things which grow wild here, must be cultivated with great care in Scotland. Pray now, (throwing himself back in his chair, and laughing) are you ever able to bring the *stoe* to perfection?"

A gentleman having to some of the usual arguments for drinking added this: You know, Sir, drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would you not allow a man to drink for that reason?"

"Yes, Sir, (said the Doctor) if he sat next you."

He would not allow Scotland to derive any credit from Lord Mansfield; for he was educated in England. "Much (said he) may be made of Scotchman, if he be caught young."

I never take a nap after dinner but when I have had a bad night; and then the nap takes me!

There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly; but then less is learned there: so that what the boys get at one end, they lose at the other.

Of the passion of love he remarked, that its violence and ill effects were much exaggerated! for who has known any real sufferings on that head, more than from the exorbitancy of any other passion?

After having talked slightly of music, he was observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsicord, and with eagerness he called her, "Why don't you dash away like Burney?" Dr. Burney upon this said to him, "I believe, Sir, we shall make a physician of you at last." Johnson with candid complacency replied, "Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me."

He had come down one morning to the breakfast-room, and been a considerable time by himself before any body appeared. When on a subsequent day, he was twitted by Mrs. Thrale for being too late, which he generally was, he defended himself by alluding to the extraordinary morning, when he had been too early: "Madam, I do not like to come down to *vacuity*."

Dr. Burney having remarked that Mr. Garrick was beginning to look old, he said, "Why, Sir, you are not to wonder at that: no man's face has had more *wear* and *tear*."

Two young women from Staffordshire visited him when Dr. Maxwell was present, to consult him on the subject of Methodism, to which they were inclined. "Come (said he,) you pretty folks, dine with Maxwell and me at the Mitre, and we will talk over that subject;" which they did, and after dinner he took one of them upon his knee, and fondled her for half an hour together.

Upon a visit to Dr. Maxwell at a country lodging near Twickenham, he asked him what sort of society he had there. The Doctor told him, but indifferently; as they chiefly consisted of opulent traders, retired from business. Sir, (said he,) they have lost the civility of tradesmen, without acquiring the manners of gentlemen.

When exasperated by contradiction, he was apt to treat his opponents with too much acrimony; as, "Sir, you don't see your way through that question. —Sir, you talk the language of ignorance." On Dr. Maxwell observing to him that a certain gentleman had remained silent the whole evening, in the midst of a very brilliant and learned society, "Sir, (said he,) the conversation *overflowed*, and *drowned* him."

Lord Lyttleton's Dialogues, he deemed a nugatory performance. "That man, (said he,) sat down to write a book, to tell the world what the world had all his life been telling him."

Being asked by a young nobleman, what was become of the gallantry and military spirit of old English nobility, he replied, "Why, my Lord, I'll tell you what is become of it, it is gone into the city, to look for a fortune."

Speaking

Speaking of a dull, tiresome fellow, whom he chanced to meet, he said, "That fellow seems to me to possess but one idea, and that is a wrong one."

Much inquiry having been made concerning a gentleman who had quitted a company where Johnson was, and no information being obtained: at last Johnson observed, "That he did not care to speak ill of any man behind his back, but he believed the gentleman was an *attorney*!"

He remarked, that a London parish was a very comfortless thing; for the clergyman seldom knew the face of one out of ten of his parishioners.

A Gentleman who had been very unhappy in marriage, married immediately after his wife died: Johnson said, it was the triumph of *boe* over *experience*.

He observed, that a man of sense and education should meet a suitable companion in a wife. It was a miserable thing when the conversation could only be such as, whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted, and probably a dispute about that.

He said foppery was never cured; it was the bad stamina of the mind, which, like those of the body, were never rectified: once a coxcomb, and always a coxcomb.

Being told that Gilbert Cowper called him the Caliban of literature; "Well, (said he,) I must dub him the Punchinello."

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess in wine. One of his friends came to sup at a tavern with him and some other gentlemen, and too plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner. When one who loved mischief, thinking to produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, some days afterwards, "Well, Sir, what did your friend say to you, as an apology for being in such a situation?" Johnson answered, "Sir, he said all that a man should say, he was sorry for it."

A ship is worse than a gaol. There is, in a gaol, better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea life, they are not fit to live on land.

Johnson censured Gwyn, an architect, for taking down a church which might have stood many years, and building a new one at a different place, for no other reason than that there might be a direct road to a new bridge; and his expression was, "You are taking a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight line to the bridge."—"No, Sir, (said Gwyn) I am putting the church in the way, that the people may not go out of the way."

Marriage is the best state for man in general; and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the married state.

Dr. Johnson said to Mr. Boswell one morning, "You will see, Sir, at Mr. Hector's, his sister, Mrs. Careless, a clergyman's widow. She was the first woman with whom I was in love. It dropt out of my head imperceptibly; but she and I shall always have a kindness for each other." He laughed at the notion that a man never can be really in love but once, and considered it as a mere romantic fancy.

MATRIMONY—A CONVERSATION.—*Boswell*. "Pray, Sir, do you not suppose that there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy, as with any one woman in particular?" *Johnson*. "Aye, fifty thousand." *Boswell*. "Then, Sir, you are not of opinion with some who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other; and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts?" *Johnson*. "To be sure not, Sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor, upon a due consideration of character and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter."

A Physician being mentioned who had lost his practice, because his whimsically changing his religion had made people distrustful of him, Mr. Boswell maintained that this was unreasonable, as religion is unconnected with medical skill. *Johnson*. "Sir, it is not unreasonable; for when people see a man absurd in what they understand, they may conclude the same of him in what they do not understand. If a physician were to take to eating of horse-flesh nobody would employ him; though one may eat horse flesh, and be a very skilful physician. If a man were educated in an absurd religion, his continuing to profess it would not hurt him, though his changing it would."

I would not have you to be gay (said the Doctor to a friend) in the presence of the distressed, because it would shock them; but you may be gay at a distance. Pain for the loss of a friend, or of a relation whom we love, is occasioned by the want which we feel. In time the vacuity is filled with something else; or, sometimes the vacuity closes itself.

Never speak of a man in his own presence. It is always indelicate, and may be offensive.

Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen. It is assuming a superiority; and it is particularly wrong to question a man concerning himself. There may be parts of his former life which he may not wish to be made known to other persons, or even brought to his own recollection.

A man should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time, but they will be remembered, and brought out against him upon some subsequent occasion.

There is nothing against which an old man should be so much upon his guard, as putting himself to nurse.

He said, "It is commonly a weak man who marries for love." We (the Doctor and Mr. Boswell) then talked of marrying women of fortune; and Mr. B. mentioned a common remark, that a man may be, upon the whole, richer by marrying a woman with a very small portion, because a woman of fortune will be proportionably expensive; whereas a woman who brings none will be very moderate in expences. *Johnson*. "Depend upon it, Sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune being used to the handling of money, spends it judiciously: but a woman who gets the command of money for the first time upon her marriage, has such a gust in spending it, that she throws it away with great profusion."

He praised the ladies of the present age, insisting that they were more faithful to their husbands, and more virtuous in every respect, than in former times, because their understandings were better cultivated. It was an undoubted proof of his good sense and good disposition, that he was ever querulous, never prone to inveigh against the present times, as is so common when superficial minds are on the fret.

CONVERSATION—ON THE NECESSITY OF RESTRAINING FORNICATION—AND ON CONJUGAL INFIDELITY.—*Johnson*. "In the barbarous ages, Sir, priests and people were equally deceived; but afterwards there were gross corruptions introduced by the clergy, such as indulgencies to priests to have concubines, and the worship of images, not, indeed, inculcated, but knowingly permitted." He strongly censured the licensed stewards at Rome. *Boswell*. "So then, Sir, you would allow of no irregular intercourse between the sexes?" *Johnson*. "To be sure I would not, Sir. I would punish it much more than is done, and so restrain it. In all countries there has been fornication, as in all countries there has been theft; but there may be more or less of the one, as of the other, in proportion to the force of law. All men will naturally commit fornication, as all men will naturally steal. And, Sir, it is very absurd to argue, as has been often done, that prostitutes are necessary to prevent the violent effects of appetite from violating the decent order of life; nay, should be permitted, in order to preserve the chastity of our wives and daughters. Depend upon it, Sir, severe laws, steadily enforced, would be sufficient against those evils, and would promote marriage."

Mr,

Mr. Boswell stated to him this case:—"Suppose a man has a daughter who he knows has been seduced, but her misfortune is concealed from the world: should he keep her in his house? Would he not, by doing so, be accessory to imposition? And, perhaps, a worthy unsuspecting man might come and marry this woman, unless the father informed him of the truth." *Johnson*. "Sir, he is accessory to no imposition. His daughter is in his house; and if a man courts her, he takes his chance. If a friend, or indeed any man, asks his opinion whether he should marry her, he would advise him against it, without telling why, because his real opinion is then required. Or, if he has any other daughters who know of her frailty, he ought not to keep her in his house. You are to consider the state of life is this; we are to judge of one another's characters as well as we can; and a man is not bound, in honesty or honour, to tell us the faults of his daughter or of himself. A man who has debauched his friend's daughter is not obliged to say to every body—"Take care of me; don't let me into your houses without suspicion. I once debauched a friend's daughter: I may debauch your's."

Mr. Boswell repeated to him an argument of a lady of his acquaintance, who maintained, that her husband's having been guilty of numberless infidelities, released her from conjugal obligations, because they were reciprocal. *Johnson*. "This is miserable stuff, Sir. To the contract of marriage, beside the man and wife, there is a third party—Society; and, if it be considered as a vow—God: and, therefore, it cannot be dissolved by their consent alone. Laws are not made for particular cases, but for mankind in general. A woman may be unhappy with her husband; but she cannot be freed from him without the approbation of the civil and ecclesiastical power. A man may be unhappy, because he is not so rich as another; but he is not to seize upon another's property with his own hand." *Boswell*. "But, Sir, this lady does not want that the contract should be dissolved; she only argues that she may indulge herself in gallantries with equal freedom as her husband does, provided she takes care not to introduce a spurious issue into his family. You know, Sir, what Macrobius has told us of Julia." *Johnson*. "This lady of your's, Sir, I think, is very fit for a brothel."

Upon the question whether a man who had been guilty of vicious actions would do well to force himself into solitude and sadness; *Johnson*. "No, Sir, unless it prevent him from being vicious again. With some people, gloomy penitence is only madness turned upside down. A man may be gloomy, till, in order to be relieved from gloom, he has recourse again to criminal indulgences."

Of a nobleman raised at a very early period to high office, he said, "His parts, Sir, are pretty well for a Lord; but would not be distinguished in a man who had nothing else but his parts."

Talking of a penurious gentleman, *Johnson* said, "Sir, he is narrow, not so much from avarice, as from impotence to spend his money. He cannot find in his heart to pour out a bottle of wine; but he should not much care if it should sour."

It having been mentioned, that a certain female political writer, whose doctrines the Doctor disliked, had of late become very fond of drels, fat hours together at her toilet, and even put on rouge—*Johnson* said, "She is better employed at her toilet than using her pen. It is better she should be reddening her own cheeks, than blackening other people's characters."

Johnson said of Chatterton, "This is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the *wretch* has written such things."

Johnson and *Boswell* being at Bristol, were by no means pleased with their inn. "Let us see now, (said *Boswell*) how we shall describe it." *Johnson* was ready with his raillery: Describe it, Sir?—Why, it was so bad, that *Boswell* wished to be in Scotland!"

Garrick (he observed) does not play the part of Archer in "The Beaux Stratagem" well. The gentleman must break out through the footman, which is not the case as he does it.

Were there no education, as in savage countries, men would have the upper hand of women. Bodily strength, no doubt, contributes to this: but it would be so, exclusive of that; for it is the mind that always governs. When it comes to dry understanding, man has the better

There is much talk of the misery which we cause to the brute creation; but they are recompensed by existence. If they were not useful to man, and therefore protected by him, they would not be near so numerous. This argument is to be found in the able and benignant Hutchinson's "Moral Philology." But the question is, whether the animals who endure such sufferings of various kinds, for the service and entertainment of man, would accept of existence upon the terms on which they have it. Madame Sevigné, who though she had many enjoyments, felt with delicate sensibility the prevalence of misery, complains of the task of existence having been imposed upon her without her consent.

That man is never happy for the *present*, is so true, that all his relief from unhappiness is only forgetting himself for a little while. Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment.

Though men are nominally entrusted with the administration of hospitals and other public institutions, almost all the good is done by one man, by whom the rest is driven on; owing to confidence in him, and indolence in them.

No man was a more attentive and nice observer of behaviour in those in whose company he happened to be, than Johnson; or, however strange it may seem to many, had a higher estimation of its refinement. One day when he and Lord Elliot were at dinner at a gentleman's house in London, upon Lord Chesterfield's Letters being mentioned, Johnson surprised the company by this sentence. "Every man of any education would rather be called a rascal, than accused of deficiency in the *graces*." Mr. Gibbon, who was present, turned to a lady who knew the Doctor well, and lived much with him, and in his quaint manner, tapping his box, addressed her thus: "Don't you think, Madam, (looking towards Johnson) that, among all your acquaintance, you could find *one* exception?" The lady smiled, and seemed to acquiesce.

When Mr. Boswell complained of having dined at a splendid table without hearing one sentence of conversation worthy of being remembered, Johnson said, "Sir, there seldom is any such conversation." Boswell. "Why then meet at table?" Johnson. "Why to eat and drink together, and promote kindness; and, Sir, this is better done when there is no solid conversation; for when there is, people differ in opinion, and get into bad humour, or some of the company who are not capable of such conversation, are left out, and feel themselves uneasy. It was for this reason, Sir Robert Walpole said, he always talked bawdy at his own table, because in that all could join."

The first time said the Doctor I was in company with Foote, was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased, and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back in my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, Sir, he was irresistible. He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintances. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer; but it was so bad, that the Servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who

they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs, he told them, "This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer."

Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. *Johnson*. "Why, Sir, all barrenness is comparative. The Scotch would not know it to be barren." *Boswell*. "Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, Sir; and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there?" *Johnson*. "Why yes, Sir, meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home!"

I do not know, said Johnson, a more disagreeable character than a valetudinarian, who thinks he may do any thing that is for his ease, and indulges himself in the grossest freedoms; Sir, he brings himself to the state of a hog in a sty.

If (said he) I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman; but she should be one who could understand me, and would add something to the conversation.

When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.

Alas, (said Johnson) what a mass of confusion should we have, if every Bishop, and every Judge, every Lawyer, Physician, and Divine, were to write books!

Talking of Rochester's Poems, he said, he had given them to Mr. Steevens to castrate for the edition of the Poets, to which he was to write Prefaces. Dr. Taylor observed, that "if Rochester had been castrated himself, his exceptionable Poems would not have been written."

Mr. Boswell once told the Doctor, that music affected him to such a degree, as often to agitate his nerves painfully, producing in his mind alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that he was ready to shed tears; and of daring resolution, so that he was inclined to rush into the thickest part of a battle. "Sir, (said he) I should never hear it, if it made me such a fool."

Talking of Ghosts, he said, "It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All arguments is against it; but all belief is for it."

He said, "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do."

Johnson. "When we talk of pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. When a man says he had pleasure with a woman, he does not mean conversation, but something of a very different nature. Philosophers tell you, that pleasure is contrary to happiness. Gross men prefer animal pleasure. So there are men who have preferred living among savages. Now what a wretch must he be, who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages! You may remember an officer at Fort Augustus, who had served in America, told us of a woman whom they were obliged to bind, in order to get her back from savage life." *Boswell*. "She must have been an animal, a beast." *Johnson*. "Sir, she was a speaking cat."

Of Goldsmith he said, "He was not an agreeable companion, for he talked always for fame. A man who does so, never can be pleasing. The man who talks to unburthen his mind, is the man to delight you."

Talkin

Talking of the Justitia hulk at Woolwich, in which criminals were punished, by being confined to labour, he said, "I do not see that they are punished by this: they must have worked equally had they never been guilty of stealing. They now only work; so, after all, they have gained; what they stole is clear gain to them; the confinement is nothing. Every man who works is confined: the smith to his shop, the taylor to his garret."

The Doctor told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that once when he dined in a numerous company of booksellers, where the room being small, the head of the table, at which he sat, was almost close to the fire, he persevered in suffering a great deal of inconvenience from the heat, rather than quit his place, and let one of them sit above him.

Goldsmith, in his diverting simplicity, complained one day, in a mixed company, of Lord Camden. "I met him (said he) at Lord Clare's house in the country, and he took no more notice of me than if I had been an ordinary man." The company having laughed heartily, Johnson stood forth in defence of his friend. "Nay, gentlemen, (said he) Dr. Goldsmith is in the right. A Nobleman ought to have made up to such a man as Goldsmith; and I think it is much against Lord Camden that he neglected him."

He would not patiently endure to hear that such respect as he thought due only to higher intellectual qualities, should be bestowed on men of slighter, though perhaps more amusing talents. Mr. Boswell told him, that one morning, when he went to breakfast with Garrick, who was very vain of his intimacy with Lord Camden, he accosted Mr. B. thus:—"Pray now, did you ? did you meet a little lawyer turning the corner, eh?"—"No, Sir (said Mr. B.) Pray what do you mean by the question?"—"Why, (replied Garrick, with an affected indifference, yet as if standing on tip-toe) Lord Camden has this moment left me. We have had a long walk together." *Johnson.* "Well Sir, Garrick talked very properly; Lord Camden *was* a little lawyer to be associating so familiarly with a lawyer."

The conversation having turned one day on *Bon Mots*, he quoted from one of the *Ana* an exquisite instance of flattery in a Maid of Honour in France, who being asked by the Queen what o'clock it was, answered, "What your Majesty pleases." He admitted that Mr. Burke's classical pun upon Mr. Wilke's being carried on the shoulders of the mob,

"——— *Numerisque fertur*
" *Lege solutus,* "———

was admirable; and though he was strangely unwilling to allow to that extraordinary man the talent of wit, he also laughed with approbation at another of his playful conceits; which was, that Horace has in one line given a description of a good desirable manor:

" *Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines.* "

The celebrated Mrs. Rudd being mentioned, Johnson said, "Fifteen years ago I should have gone to see her." "Yes," replied a gentleman; "because she was fifteen years younger?" *Johnson.* "No, Sir; but now they have a trick of putting every thing into the news-papers."

In a conversation upon the sensual intercourse between the sexes, the delight of which he ascribed chiefly to the imagination—"Were it not for imagination, (said the Doctor) a man would be as happy in the arms of a Chambermaid as of a Duchess. But such is the adventitious charm of fancy, that we find men who have violated the best principles of society, and ruined their fame and their fortune, that they might possess a woman of rank."

A celebrated wit being mentioned, Johnson said, "One may say of him as we said of a French wit, *Il n'a de l'esprit que contre Dieu.* I have been several times in company with him, but never perceived any strong power of wit. He produces a general effect by various means; he has a cheerful countenance and a gay voice; besides his trade is wit. It would be as wild in him to come into company without merriment, as for a highwayman to take the road without his pistols."

Mr. Boswell mentioned to the Doctor a dispute between a friend of his and the gentleman's lady, concerning conjugal infidelity, which Mr. B's friend had maintained was by no means so bad in the husband as in the wife.

Johnson. "Your friend was in the right, Sir. Between a man and his Maker it is a different question; but between a man and his wife, a husband's infidelity is nothing. They are connected by children, by fortune, by serious considerations of community. Wife married women don't trouble themselves about infidelity in their husbands; they detest a mistress, but don't mind a whore. My wife told me I might lie with as many women as I pleased, provided I loved her alone."

At one of Miss E. Hervey's assemblies, Dr. Johnson was following her up and down the room; upon which Lord Abington observed to her, "Your great friend is very fond of you; you can go no where without him."—"Aye" (said she) he would follow me to any part of the world."—"Then" (said the Earl) ask him to go with you to *America*." This occurred during the American war, when Johnson warmly espoused the ministerial side of the question.

John Gilbert Cooper related, that soon after the publication of his Dictionary, Garrick being asked by Johnson what people said of it, told him, that among other animadversions, it was objected that he cited authorities which were beneath the dignity of such a work, and mentioned Richardson. "Nay" (said Johnson) I have done worse than that; I have cited thee, David!"

When in good humour, he would talk of his own writings with a wonderful frankness and candour, and would even criticise them with the closest severity. One day, having read over one of his *Ramblers*, Mr. Langton asked him, how he liked that paper; he shook his head, and answered, "Too wordy!" And at another time, when one was reading his tragedy of *Irene*, to a company at a house in the country, he left the room; and somebody having asked him the reason of this, he replied, "Sir, I thought it had been better."

Talking of the minuteness with which people will record the sayings of eminent persons, a story was told, that when Pope was on a visit to Spence at Oxford, as they looked from the window they saw a Gentleman Commoner, who was just come in from riding, amusing himself with whipping at a post. Pope took occasion to say, "That young gentleman seems to have little to do." Mr. Beauclerk observed, "Then, to be sure, Spence turned round and wrote that down;" and went on to say to Doctor Johnson, "Pope, Sir, would have said the same of you, if he had seen you distilling." *Johnson.* "Sir, if Pope had told me of distilling, I would have told him of his grotto." Johnson's affection for Topham Beauclerk was so great, that when Beauclerk was labouring under that severe illness which at length occasioned his death, Johnson said, (with a voice faltering with emotion) "Sir, I would walk to the extent of the diameter of the earth to save Beauclerk."

A man, the Doctor observed, should begin to write soon; for, if he waits till his judgment is matured, his inability, through want of practice to express his conceptions, will make the disproportion so great between what he sees, and what he can attain, that he will probably be discouraged from writing at all. As a proof of the justness of this remark, we may instance what is related of the great Lord Granville; that after he had written his letter, giving an account of the battle of Dettingen, he said, "Here is a letter, expressed in terms not good enough for a tallow-chandler to have used."

Talking of a Court-martial that was sitting upon a very momentous public occasion, he expressed much doubt of an enlightened decision; and said that, perhaps there was not a member of it, who in the whole course of his life, had ever spent an hour by himself in balancing probabilities.

Talking of Gray's Odes, he said, "They are forced plants, raised in a hot-bed; and they are poor plants; they are but cucumbers, after all." A gentleman

gentleman present, who had been running down Ode-writing in general, as a bad species of poetry, unluckily said, "had they been literally cucumbers, they had been better things than Odes."—"Yes, Sir, (said Johnson) for a bog!"

His distinction of the different degrees of attainment of learning are thus marked upon two occasions. Of Queen Elizabeth he said, "She had learning enough to have given dignity to a Bishop;" and of Mr. Thomas Davies he said, "Sir, Davies has learning enough to give credit to a clergyman."

He used to quote, with great warmth, the saying of Aristotle recorded by Diogenes Laertius; that there was the same difference between one learned and unlearned, as between the living and the dead.

Though the Doctor used to censure carelessness with great vehemence, he owned that he once, to avoid the trouble of locking up five guineas, hid them, he forgot where, so that he could not find them.

A gentleman, who introduced his brother to Dr. Johnson, was earnest to recommend him to the Doctor's notice, which he did by saying, "When we have sat together some time, you'll find my brother grow very entertaining."—"Sir, (said Johnson) I can wait."

Goldsmith had long a visionary project, that some time or other when his circumstances should be easier, he would go to Aleppo, in order to acquire a knowledge as far as might be, of any arts peculiar to the East, and introduce them into Britain. When this was talked on in Dr. Johnson's company, he said, "Of all men Goldsmith his the most unfit to go out upon such an enquiry, for he is utterly ignorant of such arts as we already possess, and consequently could not know what would be accessions to our present stock of mechanical knowledge. Sir, he would bring home a grinding-barrow, which you see in every street in London, and think that he had furnished a wonderful improvement."

It is well known that there was formerly a rude custom for those who were sailing upon the Thames, to accost each other as they passed in the most abusive language they could invent, generally however with as much satirical humour as they were capable of producing. Addison gives a specimen of this ribaldry, in Number 483 of "The Spectator," when Sir Roger de Coverly and he are going to Spring-Garden. Johnson was once eminently successful in this species of contest; a fellow having attacked him with some coarse raillery, Johnson answered thus, "Sir, your wife (under pretence of keeping a bawdy-house) is a receiver of stolen-goods."

As Johnson always allowed the extraordinary talents of Mr. Burke, so Mr. Burke was fully sensible of the wonderful powers of Johnson. Mr. Langton recollects having passed an evening with both of them, when Mr. Burke repeatedly entered upon topics which it is evident he would have illustrated with extensive knowledge and richness of expression; but Johnson always seized upon the conversation, in which, however, he quitted himself in a most masterly manner. As Mr. Burke and Mr. Langton were walking home, Mr. Burke observed that Johnson had been very great that night; Mr. Langton joined in this, but added he could have wished to hear more from another person; (plainly intimating that he meant Mr. Burke) "O, no, (said Mr. Burke) it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him!"

A friend of mine, (said the Doctor) came to me and told me, that a lady wished to have Dodd's picture in a bracelet, and asked me for a motto. I said, that I could think of no better than *Curat Lex*. I was very willing to have him pardoned, that is, to have the sentence changed to transportation: but, when he was once hanged, I did not wish he should be made a Saint.

Chymistry was always an interesting pursuit with Dr. Johnson. Whilst he was in Wiltshire, he attended some experiments that were made by a physician at Salisbury, on the new kinds of air. In the course of the experiments, frequent

frequent mention being made of Dr. Priestley, Dr. Johnson knit his brows, and in a stern manner enquired, "Why do we hear so much of Doctor Priestley?"

Mr. Boswell once regretted that Goldsmith would, upon every occasion, endeavour to shine, by which he often exposed himself; and Mr. Langton observed, that he was not like Addison, who was content with the fame of his writings, and did not aim also at excellency in conversation, for which he found himself unfit; and that he said to a lady, who complained of his having talked little in company, "Madam, I have but nine-pence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds." Mr. Boswell observed, that Goldsmith had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but, not content with that, was always taking out his purse. "Yes, Sir, (said Johnson) and that so often an empty purse!"

Goldsmith's incessant desire of being conspicuous in company, was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage, as one should have hardly supposed in a man of genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which was every where paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with Boswell for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. "Sir, (said he) you are for making a monarchy of what should be a Republic."

He was still more mortified, when talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present; a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself, as if about to speak, suddenly stopping him, saying, "Stay, stay.—Doctor Shonson is going to say something." This was, no doubt, very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

It may also be observed, that Goldsmith was sometimes content to be treated with an easy familiarity, but, upon occasions, would be consequential and important. An instance of this occurred in a small particular. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends; as Beauclerk, Beau; Boswell, Bozzi; Langton, Lanky; Murphy, Mur; Sheridan, Sherry. Mr. Boswell remembers one day, when Tom Davies was telling that Doctor Johnson said, "We are all in labour for a name to Goldy's play." Goldsmith seemed displeased that such a liberty should be taken with his name, and said, "I have often told him not to call me Goldy." Tom was remarkably attentive to the most minute circumstance about Johnson. Mr. Boswell recollects his telling him once, on his arrival in London, "Sir, our great friend has made an improvement on his appellation of old Mr. Sheridan. He calls him now Sherry Derry."

Talking of puns, Johnson, who had a great contempt for that species of wit, deigned once to allow that there was one good pun in "Menagiana," on the word *corps*.

Mr. Boswell once told him that Mrs. Macaulay said, she wondered how he could reconcile his political principles with his moral; his notions of inequality and subordination with wishing well to the happiness of all mankind, who might live so agreeably, had they all their portions of land, and none to domineer over another. Johnson. "Why, Sir, I reconcile my principles very well, because mankind are happier in a state of inequality and subordination. Were they to be in this pretty state of equality, they would soon degenerate into brutes;—they would soon become Monboddos's nation:—their tails would grow. Sir, all would be losers, were all to work to all:—they would have no intellectual improvement. All intellectual improvement arises from leisure: all leisure arises from one working for another."

Duelling.—At General Ogelthorpe's, one day, the subject of Duelling being started, the Doctor delivered himself thus:—"As men become in a high degree

gree refined, various causes of offence arise ; which are considered to be of such importance, that life must be staked to atone for them, though in reality they are not so. A body that has received a very fine polish may be easily hurt. Before men arrive at this artificial refinement, if one tells his neighbour he lies, his neighbour tells him he lies; if one gives his neighbour a blow, his neighbour gives him a blow : but in a state of highly polished society, an affront is held to be a serious injury. It must, therefore, be resented, or rather a duel must be fought upon it ; as men have agreed to banish from their society one who puts up with an affront without fighting a duel. Now, Sir, it is never unlawful to fight in self-defence. He, then, who fights a duel, does not fight from passion with his antagonist, but out of self-defence ; to avert the stigma of the world, and to prevent himself from being driven out of society. I could wish that there was not that superfluity of refinement ; but while such notions prevail, no doubt a man may lawfully fight a duel."

Let it be remembered, that this justification is applicable only to the person who receives an affront. All mankind must condemn the aggressor.

The General said, that when he was a very young man, only fifteen, serving under Prince Eugene of Savoy, he was sitting in a company at table with a Prince of Wirtemberg. The Prince took up a glass of wine, and, by a filip, made some of it fly in Ogelthrope's face. Here was a nice dilemma. To have challenged him instantly, might have fixed a quarrelsome character on the young soldier ; to have taken no notice of it, might have been considered as cowardice. Ogelthrope, therefore, keeping his eye upon the Prince, and smiling all the time, as if he took what his Highness had done in jest, said, "*Mon Prince, that's a good joke ; but we do it much better in England,*" and threw a whole glass of wine in the Prince's face. An old General who sat by, said, "*I l'a bien fait, mon Prince, vous l'avez commence ;*" and thus all ended in good humour.

Johnson, one evening at the Crown and Anchor tavern, was vehement against old Dr. Mounsey, of Chelsea Hospital, as "a fellow who swore and talked bawdy." "I have been often in his company (said Dr. Percy) and never heard him swear or talk bawdy." Mr. Davies, who sat next to Dr. Percy, having after this had some conversation aside with him, made a discovery which, in his zeal to pay court to Dr. Johnson, he eagerly proclaimed aloud from the foot of the table : "O, Sir, I have found out a very good reason why Dr. Percy never heard Mounsey swear or talk bawdy ; for he tells me, he never saw him but at the Duke of Northumberland's table." "And so, Sir, (said Johnson loudly, to Dr. Percy) you would shield this man from the charge of swearing and talking bawdy, because he did not do so at the Duke of Northumberland's table. Sir, you might as well tell us that you had seen him hold up his hand at the Old Bailey, and he neither swore nor talked bawdy ; or that you had seen him in the cart at Tyburn, and he neither swore or talked bawdy. And is it thus, Sir, that you presume to controvert what I have related ?" Dr. Johnson's animadversion was uttered in such a manner, that Dr. Percy seemed to be displeased, and soon afterwards left the company.

Mr. Boswell told Dr. Johnson that he had several times, when in Italy, seen the experiment of placing a scorpion within a circle of burning coals ; that it ran round and round in extreme pain ; and finding no way to escape, retired to the centre, and, like a true Stoick philosopher, darted its sting into its head, and thus at once freed itself from its woes. "*This must end 'em.*" Mr. Boswell said, this was a curious fact, as it shewed deliberate suicide in a reptile. Johnson would not admit the fact. He said, Maupertius was of opinion that it does not kill itself, but dies of the heat ; that it gets to the centre of the circle, as the coolest place : that its turning its tail in upon its head is merely a convulsion, and that it does not sting itself. He said he would be satisfied if the great anatomist Morgagni, after dissecting a scorpion upon whom the experiment had been tried, should certify that its sting had penetrated into its head.

Johnson

Johnson had a particularity, of which none of his friends ever ventured to ask an explanation. It appeared to be some superstitious habit, which he had contracted early, and from which he had never called upon his reason to disentangle him. This was, his anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage, by a certain number of steps from a certain point, or at least so as that his right or his left foot, should constantly make the first actual movement when he came close to the door or passage. Upon innumerable occasions, he has been observed suddenly to stop, and then seem to count his steps with a deep earnestness; and when he had neglected or gone wrong in this kind of magical movement, he would go back again, put himself in a proper posture to begin the ceremony, and, having gone through it, break from his abstractions, walk briskly on, and join his companion. A strange instance of something of this nature, even when on horseback, happened when he was in the isle of Sky. Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed him to go a good way about, rather than cross a particular alley in Leicester fields; but this Sir Joshua imputed to his having had some disagreeable recollection associated with it.

It was once suggested to Johnson, that Kings must be unhappy, because they are deprived of the greatest of all satisfactions, easy and unreserved society. *Johnson*. "That is an ill-founded notion. Being a King does not exclude a man from such society. Great Kings have always been social. The King of Prussia, the only great King at present, is very social. Charles the Second, the last King of England who was a man of parts, was social; and our Henrys and Edwards were all social."

Mr. Dempster having endeavoured to maintain that intrinsic merit *ought* to make the only distinction amongst mankind:—*Johnson*. "Why, Sir, mankind have found that this cannot be. How shall we determine the proportion of intrinsic merit? Were that to be the only distinction amongst mankind, we should soon quarrel about the degrees of it. Were all distinctions abolished, the strongest would not long acquiesce, but would endeavour to obtain a superiority by their bodily strength. But, Sir, as subordination is very necessary for society, and contentions for superiority very dangerous, mankind, that is to say, all civilized nations, have settled it upon a plain invariable principle. A man is born to hereditary rank; or his being appointed to certain offices, gives him a certain rank. Subordination tends greatly to human happiness. Were we all upon an equality, we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure."

Mr. Ogilvie, a Scotch clergyman, was unlucky enough one evening, at the Mitre-tavern, to choose for the topic of his conversation the praises of his native country. He began with saying that there was very rich land round Edinburgh. Goldsmith, who had studied physic there, contradicted this, very untruly, with a sneering laugh. Disconcerted a little by this, Mr. Ogilvie now took new ground, where he thought himself perfectly safe; for he observed, that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects. *Johnson*. "I believe, Sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects. and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, Sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England!" This unexpected and pointed sally produced a roar of applause.

When giving Mr. Boswell advice, as to his travels, Dr. Johnson did not dwell upon cities, and palaces, and pictures, and shews, and Arcadian scenes. He was of Lord Essex's opinion, who advises his kinsman, Roger Earl of Rutland, "rather to go an hundred miles to speak with one wise man, than five miles to see a fair town."

Speaking of Mr. Hanway, who published *A Six Weeks Tour through the South of England*, "Jonas (said he) acquired some reputation by travelling abroad, but lost it all by travelling at home."

Of Dr. Priestley's theological works, he remarked, that they tended to unsettle every every thing, and yet settle nothing.—The same, we presume, may be said of his political effusions!

In a Latin conversation with the Pere Boscovitz, at the house of Mrs. Cholmondeley, Dr. Maxwell heard him maintain the superiority of Sir Isaac Newton over all foreign philosophers, with a dignity and eloquence that surprised that learned foreigner. It being observed to him, that a rage for every thing English prevailed much in France after Lord Chatham's glorious war: he said, he did not wonder at it, for that we had drubbed those fellows into a proper reverence for us, and that their national petulance required periodical chastisement!

Speaking of the French novels, compared with Richardson's, he said they might be pretty baubles, but a wren was not an eagle.

When Johnson first became acquainted with David Mallet, they once went with some other gentlemen, to laugh an hour at Bartholomew Fair.—At one of the booths was an amazing large bear, which the showman assured them was "*caught in the undiscovered parts of the remotest Russia.*"—The bear was muzzled, and might therefore be approached with safety; but to all the company, except Johnson, was very surly and ill-tempered:—of the Doctor he appeared extremely fond, rubbed against him, and shewed every mark of aukward kindness. "How is it (said one of the company) that this animal is so attached to Mr. Johnson?"—"Because (replied Mallet) he knows that Linnæus could have classed them together, as *two animals of one species!*"

The Doctor disliked Mallet for his tendency towards infidelity; and this sarcasm turned his dislike into downright hatred. He never spoke to him afterwards, but has gibbeted his name in the octavo Dictionary, under the word ALIAS.

Dr. Sumner, of Harrow, used to tell this story of Johnson:—They were dining one day, with many other persons, at Mrs. Macauley's; she had talked a long time at dinner about the natural equality of mankind; Johnson, when she had finished her harrangue, rose up from the table, and with great solemnity of countenance, and a bow to the ground, said to the servant, who was waiting behind his chair, "Mr. John, pray be seated in my place, and permit me to wait upon you in my turn; your mistress says, you hear, that we are all equal."

When some one was lamenting Foote's unlucky fate of being kicked in Dublin, Johnson said he was glad of it; he is rising in the world, said he; when he was in England, no one thought it worth while to kick him.

Johnson used to say, a man was a scoundrel that was afraid of any thing.

Of the state of learning amongst the Scots, he said, It is with their learning as with provisions in a besieged town—Every one has a mouthful, and no one a bellyful.

To some lady who was praising Shenstone's Poems very much, and who had an Italian grayhound lying by the fire, he said, Shenstone holds amongst poets the same rank your dog holds amongst dogs; he has not the sagacity of the hound, the docility of the Spaniel, or the courage of the Bull-dog; yet he is still a pretty fellow.

On Foote's wit and readiness of repartee he thought very highly—He was, says he, the readiest dog at an escape I ever knew: if you thought you had him on the ground fairly down, he was upon his legs and over your shoulders again in an instant.

When some one asked him whether they should introduce Hugh Kelly, the author, to him—No, Sir, says he; I never desire to converse with a man who has written more than he has read; yet when his play was acted for the benefit of his widow, Johnson finished a Prologue.

He said, when he first conversed with Mr. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, he was very much inclined to think he had been there; but he had afterwards altered his opinion.

DR. JOHNSON'S
CONVERSATION
WITH
THE KING.

IN February, 1767, there happened one of the most remarkable incidents of Johnson's life, which gratified his *monarchical* enthusiasm, and which he loved to relate with all its circumstances, when requested by his friends. This was his being honoured by a private conversation with his Majesty, in the library at the Queen's house. He had frequently visited those splendid rooms and noble collection of books which he used to say was more numerous and curious than he supposed any person could have made in the time which the King had employed. Mr. Barnard, the librarian, took care that he should have every accommodation that could contribute to his ease and convenience, while indulging his literary taste in that place; so that he had a very agreeable resource at leisure hours.

His Majesty having been informed of his occasional visits, was pleased to signify a desire that he should be told when Dr. Johnson next came to the library. Accordingly, the next time that Johnson did come, as soon as he was fairly engaged with a book, on which while he sat by the fire, he seemed quite intent, Mr. Barnard stole round to the apartment where the King was, and, in obedience to his Majesty's commands, mentioned that Dr. Johnson was then in the library. His Majesty said he was at leisure, and would go to him; upon which Mr. Barnard took one of the candles that stood on the King's table, and lighted his Majesty through a suite of rooms, till they came to a private door in the library, of which his Majesty had the key. Being entered, Mr. Barnard stepped forward hastily to Dr. Johnson, who was still in a profound study, and whispered him, "Sir, here is the King. Johnson started up, and stood still. His Majesty approached him, and at once was courtly easy.

His Majesty began by observing, that he understood he came sometimes to the library; and then mentioning his having heard that the Doctor had been lately at Oxford, asked him if he was not fond of going thither. To which Johnson answered, he was indeed fond of going to Oxford sometimes, but was likewise glad to come back again. The King then asked him what they were doing at Oxford. Johnson answered, he could not much commend their diligence, but that in some respect they were mended, for they had put their press under better regulations, and were at this time printing Polybius. He was then asked whether there were better libraries at Oxford or at Cambridge. He answered, he believed the Bodleian was larger than any they had at Cambridge; at the same time adding, "I hope, whether we have more Books or not than they have at Cambridge, we shall make as good use of them as they do." Being asked whether All-Souls or Christ-Church library was the largest, he answered, "All-Souls library is the largest we have, except the Bodleian." "Aye, (said the King) that is the public library."

His Majesty enquired if he was then writing any thing. He answered, he was not, for he had pretty well told the world what he knew, and must reach to acquire more knowledge. The King, as it should seem with a view to urge him to rely on his own stories as an original writer, and to continue his labours, then said, "I do not think you borrow much from any body." Johnson said, he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so to (said the King) if you had not written so well."—Johnson

observed to Mr. Boswell, upon this, that no man could have paid a handsomer compliment; and it was fit for a King to pay. It was decisive. When asked by another friend, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, whether he made any reply to this high compliment, he answered, "No, Sir. When the King had said it, it was to be so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my Sovereign." Perhaps no man who had spent his whole life in courts could have shewn a more nice and dignified sense of true politeness, than Johnson did in this instance.

His Majesty then observed to him that he supposed he must have read a great deal; Johnson answered, that he *thought* more than he *read*; and he had read a great deal in the early part of his life, but having fallen into ill health, he had not been able to read much, compared with others: for instance, he said he had not read much compared with Dr. Warburton. Upon which the King said, that he heard Dr. Warburton was a man of such general knowledge, that you could scarce talk with him on any subject on which he was not qualified to speak; and that his learning resembled Garrick's acting in its universality. His Majesty then talked of the controversy between Warburton and Lowth, which he seemed to have read, and asked Johnson what he thought of it. Johnson answered, "Warburton has most general, scholastic learning; Lowth is the more correct scholar. I do not know which of them calls names best." The King was pleased to say he was of the same opinion; adding, "You do not think then, Dr. Johnson, that there was much argument in the case." Johnson said, he did not think there was. "Why, truly, (said the King) when once it comes to calling names, argument is pretty well at an end."

His Majesty then asked him what he thought of Lord Lyttelton's *History*, which was then just published. Johnson said, he thought his style pretty good, but he had blamed Henry the Second rather too much. "Why (said the King) they seldom do these things by halves." No, Sir, not to Kings." But fearing to be misunderstood, he proceeded to explain himself; and immediately subjoined, "That for those who spoke worse of Kings than they deserved, he could find no excuse, but that he could more easily conceive how some might speak better of them than they deserved, without any ill intention; for as Kings have much in their power to give, those who were favoured by them would frequently, from gratitude, exaggerate their praises; and as this proceeds from a good motive, it was certainly excusable, as far as error could be excusable."

The King then asked him what he thought of Dr. Hill. Johnson then answered, that he was an ingenious man, but had no veracity; and immediately mentioned, as an instance of it, an assertion of that writer, that he had seen objects magnified to a much greater degree by using three or four microscopes at a time, than by using one. "Now (added Johnson) every one acquainted with microscopes knows, that the more of them he looks through, the less the object will appear." "Why (replied the King) it is not only telling an untruth, but telling it clumsily; for, if that be the case, every one who can look through a microscope will be able to detect him."

I now (said Johnson to his friends, when relating what had passed) began to consider that I was deprecating this man in the estimation of his Sovereign, and thought it was time for me to say something that might be more favourable." He added, therefore, that Dr. Hill was, notwithstanding a very curious observer; and if he would have been content to have told the world no more than he knew, he might have been a considerable man, and needed not to have recourse to such mean expedients to raise his reputation.

The King then talked of literary journals, mentioned particularly the *Journal des Savans*, and asked Johnson if it was well done. Johnson said, it was formerly very well done, and gave some account of the persons who began it, and carried it on for some years; enlarging at the same time, on the nature

and use of such works. The King asked him if it was well done now. Johnson answered, he had reason to think it was. The King then asked if there were any other literary journals published in this Kingdom, except the Monthly and Critical Reviews; and on being answered there were no other, his Majesty asked which of them was the best: Johnson answered, that the Monthly Review was done with most care, the Critical upon the best principles; adding, that the authors of the Monthly Review were enemies to the Church. This the King said he was sorry to hear.

The conversation next turned on the Philosophical Transactions, when Johnson observed, that they had now a better method of arranging their materials than formerly. "Aye, (said the King) they are obliged to Dr. Johnson for that;" for his Majesty had heard and remembered the circumstance, which Johnson himself had forgot.

His Majesty expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it. Johnson signified his readiness to comply with his Majesty's wishes.

During the whole of this interview, Johnson talked to his Majesty with profound respect, but still in his firm manly manner, with a sonorous voice, and never in that subdued tone which is commonly used at the levee and in the drawing-room. After the King withdrew, Johnson shewed himself highly pleased with his Majesty's conversation and gracious behaviour. He said to Barnard, "Sir, they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And he afterwards observed to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman as we may suppose Lewis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second."

At Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where a circle of Johnson's friends was collected round him to hear his account of this memorable conversation, Dr. Joseph Warton, in his frank and lively manner, was very active in pressing him to mention the particulars. "Come now, Sir, this is an interesting matter; do favour us with it." Johnson, with great good humour, complied.

He told them, "I found his Majesty wished I should talk, and I made it my business to talk. I find it does a man good to be talked to by his Sovereign. In the first place, a man cannot be in a passion—" Here some question interrupted him, which is to be regretted, as he certainly would have pointed out and illustrated many circumstances of advantage, from being in a situation, where the powers of the mind are at once excited to vigorous exertion, and tempered by reverential awe.

During all the time that Dr. Johnson was employed in relating to the circle at Sir Joshua Reynolds's the particulars of what passed between the King and him, Dr. Goldsmith remained unmoved upon a sofa at some distance, affecting not to join in the least in the eager curiosity of the company. He assigned as a reason for his gloom and seeming inattention, that he apprehended Johnson had relinquished his purpose of furnishing him with a Prologue to his play, with the hopes of which he had been flattered; but it was strongly suspected that he was fretting with chagrin and envy at the singular honour Dr. Johnson had lately enjoyed. At length, the frankness and simplicity of his natural character prevailed. He sprung from the sofa, advanced to Johnson, and in a kind of flutter, from imagining himself in the situation which he had just been hearing described, exclaimed, "Well, you acquitted yourself in this conversation better than I should have done; for I should have bowed and stammered through the whole of it."

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES, BON MOTS, &c.

FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS.

BARRETTI'S QUARREL WITH DR. JOHNSON.

IT is well known that Omai, the native of Otaheite, learned to play at chess whilst he was in London. As his proficiency in that game was the cause of Mr Barretti's dropping the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson, after having cultivated it above thirty years, the relation of it, in Mr. Barretti's own words, is here inserted, extracted from his own Tolendron.

"My story may be a lesson to eager mortals to mistrust the duration of any worldly enjoyment, as even the best cemented friendship, which I consider as the most precious of earthly blessings, is but a precarious one, and subject, like all the rest, to be blasted away in an unexpected moment, by the capriciousness of chance, and by some one of those trifling weaknesses, unaccountably engrafted even in the noblest minds that ever shewed to what pitch human nature may be elevated. About thirteen months before Dr. Johnson went the way of all flesh, my visits to him grew to be much less frequent than they used to be, on account of my gout and other infirmities, which permitted not me going often from Edward-street, Cavendish-square, to Bolton-court, Fleet-street, as it had been the case in my better days; yet once or twice every month I never failed to go to him, and he was always glad to see the oldest friend he had in the world, which, since Mr. Garrick's death, was the appellation he honoured me with, and constantly requested me to see him as often as I could.

"One day, and alas! it was the last time I saw him, I called on him, not without some anxiety, as I had heard that he had been very ill; but found him so well as to be in very high spirits, of which he soon made me aware, because the conversation happening to turn about Otaheite, he recollected that Omai had once conquered me at chess; a subject, on which, whenever chance brought it about, he never failed to rally me most unmercifully, and make himself mighty merry with.

"This time, more than he had ever done before, he pushed this banter on at such a rate, that at last he chafed me, and made me so angry, that, not being able to put a stop to it, I snatched up my hat and stick, and quitted him in a most choleric mood. The skilful translator of Tasso, who was a witness to that ridiculous scene, may tell whether the Doctor's obstreperous merriment deserved approbation or blame; but such was Johnson, that, whatever was the matter in hand, if he was in the humour, he would carry it as far as he could; nor was he much in the habit, even with much higher folks than myself, to refrain from sallies, which not seldom would carry him further than he intended. Vexed at his having given me cause to be angry, and at my own anger too, I was not in haste to see him again; and he heard from more than one, that my resentment continued. Finding, at last, or supposing that I might not call on him any more, he requested a respectable friend to tell me that he would be glad to see me as soon as possible; but this message was delivered me while making ready to go into Sussex, that the newspapers apprised me my friend was no more, and England had lost possibly, the greatest of our literary ornaments.

ANECDOTES OF DR. GOLDSMITH.

AS Goldsmith wrote for the bookellers, he was looked on by many of them as a literary drudge, equal to the task of compiling and translating, but little capable of original, and still less of poetical composition; he nevertheless

less wrote one of the finest poems of the lyric kind that our language has to boast of; the Ballad, "Turn gentle Hermit of the Dale"; and surprised his friends with "The Traveller," a poem which contains some particulars of his own history. Johnson was supposed to have assisted him; but he contributed to the perfection of it only four lines: his opinion of it was, that it was the best written poem since the time of Pope. The favourable reception which this essay of his poetical talent met with, soon after tempted Goldsmith to the publication of his "Deserted Village," the merits whereof consist in beautiful descriptions of rural manners; and are sufficiently known.

His poems are replete with fine moral sentiments, and bespeak a great dignity of mind; yet he had no sense of the shame, nor dread of the evils, of poverty.

In his dealings with the booksellers, he is charged with having never fulfilled his engagements. In one year he got of them, and by his plays, a large sum, which he dissipated by gaming and extravagance, and died poor in 1774.

He was buried in the Poet's Corner, in Westminster Abbey, and the inscription on his monument was written by Johnson.

The Doctor used to say he could play on the German flute as well as most men, and at other times, as well as any man living: but, in truth, he understood not the character in which music is written, and played on that instrument, as many of the vulgar do, merely by ear. Roubiliac, the sculptor, a merry fellow, once heard him play; and minding to put a trick on him, pretended to be charmed with his performance; as, also, that himself was skilled in the art, and entreated him to repeat the air, that he might write it down. Goldsmith readily consenting, Roubiliac called for paper, and scored thereon a few five-lined staves, which having done, Goldsmith proceeded to play, and Roubiliac to write; but his writing was only such random notes on the lines and spaces, as any one might set down who had ever inspected a page of music. When they had both done, Roubiliac shewed the paper to Goldsmith, who looking over it with seeming great attention, said it was very correct, and that if he had not seen him do it, he never could have believed his friend was capable of writing music after him.

A minister once observed in a circle of courtiers, that nothing could be more ridiculous than the manner in which the Council of State assembled in some of the negro nations. "In the council-chamber," said he, "are placed twelve large jars, half full of water. Twelve Counsellors of State enter naked, and strolling along with great gravity, each leaps into his jar, and immerses himself up to his chin; and in this pretty attitude they deliberate about national affairs. You do not smile," continued the Minister, to a noble Lord who sat next to him. Smile! No," answered his Lordship, "I see something more ridiculous than that every day."—"Pray what is it?" returned the Minister. "A country," replied the Nobleman, "where the Council is filled with nothing but jars!"

In order to deceive a woman who was distinguished by a remarkable volubility of tongue, though, in other respects, not deficient in sense, a person was introduced to her as one that was endowed with an uncommon share of wit. The lady received him with every demonstration of joy, and every mark of politeness; but through extreme eagerness to render herself agreeable, she asked him a hundred questions without perceiving that he turned no answer. At the conclusion of the visit, being asked how she liked her new acquaintance, she answered, "He is indeed a delightful man! his wit is so ready, and so exquisitely turned!" At this exclamation, the whole company burst into a loud laugh; for this charming companion, this distinguished wit—was *dumb*!

A gentleman of a miserable disposition, somewhat wounded at a sarcasm played upon him by a wag of his acquaintance, said, he wished he was in parliament,

parliament, if it were only to propose a heavy pole-tax on Wits. "Aye," said the satyrift, "I do not wonder at that: because you know it would not affect yourself!"

As some British officers were conversing with Dr. Stearns, an American Astronomer, on the hardness of the times, whilst the late war continued in America; one of them said to the Doctor, thinking, as they call it, to smoke him, "Pray, sir, as you are a mathematician, can you tell us how long it will take to surmount unsurmountable difficulties?"—"Yes, sir," answered the Doctor, "just as long as it will take to get below the bottom of the bottomless pit!—D—n you!" said the officer; "you are too deep for me."

A company at Spencer's, lately speaking of the libel then depending in Doctor's Commons against a young bridegroom, for non-performance of conjugal rites, it was observed, that the bride did not complain till after the *third night*. "No wonder then," replied a theatrical wag, "she should object to an empty house!"

Where no harm is meant, no harm can be applied; and people *do* as often as they *say* what will bear a construction very different from their intention. A servant girl, much fatigued with her work, declared, that *men* ought to do *women's* business; and that she wished she was a *mistress*, instead of what she was; for she was quite tired of being a *maid*!

An English gentleman travelling through France during the late disturbances, observed to a Parisian, "that he thought the people of France were something similar to mad-dogs in England, as it was but to give them a bad name, and they were instantly hung up."—"Ah, ver true," returned the Frenchman, "it is better be *von dog* in England, than *von gentleman* in Paris."

A gentleman, not long since, passing through Lincoln's-inn-fields, overheard a man speaking very *bad French*; upon which he observed to an acquaintance with him, that the French ought in future to be classed amongst the *dead languages*. "Why so?" asked his friend. "Because," replied the gentleman, "it has been just *murdered*!"

A man, being at confession, accused himself of various sins, and among other things said, that he had just given his wife a sound drubbing. "Why did you do that, my son?" said the Father Confessor. "I never go to confession," replied the penitent, "but I do the same thing; and if I omitted it, my confession would be of little consequence. In compliance with the orders of our holy mother church, I confess once a year; and as my memory is very defective, I should never recollect any thing I had done, unless I beat my wife, who is then sure to remind me of all the sins I have committed in the whole course of my life."

Monsieur de Brancas, one of the attendants of the Queen-Dowager of Louis XIV. though extremely fond of his bride, did not fail, on his wedding-night, to go into the cold-bath, according to his usual custom, and from thence to repair to his own apartment. But, as he was undressing, his Valet de Chambre could not refrain asking him how it happened that he slept alone, and not with his bride. "Faith," said M. de Brancas, "I had quite forgotten that I was married!"

The same gentleman, having one day attended his royal mistress to church, as she was kneeling before him, with her head bent very low, he mistook her back for a *prie dieu*, and very deliberately placed his knees upon it: at the same time fixing his elbows on her shoulders, to the great astonishment of the Queen, and amusement of the congregation.

A bon vivant of fashion, lately on his death-bed, to which he was brought by an immoderate use of wine, and other liquors, after having been seriously taken leave of by Dr. Pitcairn, (who has little pity for such kind of patients) and ingenuously told that he could not in all human probability survive twelve hours, which would be eight o'clock the next morning, exerted the small remains of his strength to call the Doctor back into his presence, which

having

having accomplished with difficulty, his loudest effort not exceeding a whisper, with the true spirit of an Epicurean philosophy he said, "Doctor, I'll bet you a bottle I live till nine!"

The Rev. Rowland Hill, when at College, was remarkable for the vivacity of his manners, and frequent wittiness of his observations. In a conversation on the power of the letter *H*, where it was contended that it was no letter, but a single aspiration or breathing, Rowland took the opposite side of the question, and insisted on its being, to all intents and purposes, a letter; and concluded by observing that, if it were not, it was a very serious affair to him, as it would occasion his being *ill* all the days of his life.

A gentleman, not far from Temple Bar, one Sunday in the afternoon, went to a tavern, and returning home towards the evening, pretty well heated with punch, his Xantippe fell reading to him a loud lesson, and among other revilings, told him, that the Devil, the Devil, would fetch him! At last, he broke out of a long silence, and told her, "I pr'ythee, good wife, hold thyself content, for I know that the Devil will do me no hurt, for I have married his *kinwoman*!"

A country carpenter, at work upon an out-house a few miles from town, being visited by a remarkably hard shower of rain, was obliged to retire to a neighbouring public-house; but as he was expecting some of his fellow workmen every moment, he could not devise a method to make them sensible of his place of resort: but a man coming up while he was hesitating, he begged him, as Not knowing much about indoiting, to write upon a gate—"Gone to the Goose!" Instead of this, the other, being a wag, wrote—"Gone to the Gallows!" "That's reeght, and thank'e measter," said the carpenter, (pretending at the same time to read it) "theyne be sure to follow me!"

Two females who had married aged husbands, having some difference, one of them thinking to rally the other, told her—To be sure she had married very prudently, having a *husband* and a *father* in one person!—"Yes, my dear," replied the other; "but you have the advantage of me, having a *husband* and a *child*, in yours!"

A prisoner lately tried at one of the county assizes, after he had obtained leave to deliver a defence which he had written, read the following:—"My Lord, if I am guilty, I wish I may be *crapt*! 'tis true, I has bin so misfortunate as to be *pattered* several times in Lunnun; but never *spoke* to properly—therefore hope you'll quit me, and let me be *turned up*.—Gentlemen of the Jury, I shall interfeede for you; pray take my case into consideration—and I hope you will cast no *encomiums* on my past conduct."

A carpenter, on board a ship returning from the West Indies, having lost his saw, attributed the theft to one of the Captain's servants, a little negro boy: the lad, however, strenuously denied all knowledge of the affair; and in this doubtful way the matter remained, when, one day, the carpenter exclaiming, in the presence of young Mungo—"This d—d saw sticks in my gizzard!" he instantly ran to the Captain, almost overcome with joy, crying out—"Masser, me glad!"—"Glad of what?" said the Captain. "O me so glad de carpenman find him saw!"—"Ah, ah! and where did he find it?"—"Yes, masser! indeed me tell no lie; for me hear him say it stick in his gizzar!"

As George Selwyn was one evening passing through Drury-lane, an old woman standing with a basket of flounders, invited him to be a customer, saying, "All *just* alive, your honour!"—"How long," said the wag, who had no inclination to purchase, "will it be before they are quite alive?"

A gentleman well known in the *lottery world*, having become possessed of property, nobody knows how, had lately a concert at his house, wishing to be thought a man of taste, though he knows nothing of music; when looking over one of the performers, who had his violin under his arm—"Why don't you play?" said he. "Sir," said the musician, pointing with his bow to the

the book, "here are so many bars of *Rest*." "Dam'me, what do you mean by *rest*? I pay you to *play* not to *rest*!"

A Methodist preacher being lately requested to perform the offices for a dying sister, very earnestly pressed on her to believe; as a preparative to the beatific state, that *flesh and blood* cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven: "Then God be praised!" replied the poor patient, thankfully. "I have been so long ailing that I am now nothing but *skin and bone*!"

In the year 1734, the following odd combinations occurred in the title of a pamphlet published in London: "The deformity of sin cured; a sermon preached at St. Michael's, Crooked Lane, before the Prince of Orange, by the Rev. J. Crookbanks. Sold by Matthew Denton, at the Crooked Billet, near Cripple-gate, and by all other booksellers." The Prince of Orange was deformed in person; and the words of the text were *Every Crooked Path shall be made straight*.

At the Sitting in last Easter Term, a cause being called on, where was no defence, the Attorney on the part of the Defendant, who was known to be one of the sharp practitioners, had given to Counsel, for his brief, a *plain sheet of paper*; which was remarked by one in Court to be the very first time he had ever given a *plain* brief to Counsel.

One of those sublime geniuses, whose chief occupation consists in wielding with becoming address, that weapon or instrument called a razor, lately received three eggs of a wonderful nature from an acquaintance abroad; in order to propagate their species, and raise his name to immortality, he placed them under a hen, or more properly placed the hen upon them, who being averse to the gratifying his desires, it became necessary to attempt unnatural means, in order to deter the poor animal into a compliance; which had so strange an effect, that it sunk under the repeated ill-treatment which it received. A wag of an Exciseman, hearing of the affair reviled the barber, and called him a paper-scully son of a b—h for acting in such a manner. This stung him more than the former calamity. "What do you mean, Sir?" says he, "my scully is as thick as yours and be d-mn'd to you!"

"Arrah!" says an Irish seaman to his officer, in consequence of his having made too free with a kettle, "can a thing be lost when one knows where it is?" "No, Patt," answered the officer. "Why then by Jassus, Sir, your kettle is gone into the sea."

A rude Welshman being accused of stealing a blunderbuss that was found upon him, replied, it was false as God was true; and in order to prove it was his own property, affirmed with an oath, that *he had brought it up*. Being desired to explain what he meant by bringing it up. That it was a very young one when it came to him at first, and that he had brought it up ever since it was a pistol!

A poor man who had discovered a priest too familiar with his wife, publicly related the circumstance; but being unable to produce sufficient proof of the fact, he was prosecuted; and being commanded to stand up, in his parish church, at high mass, and say, "Mouth, thou nest!" he fulfilled the penance. Presently, however, he placed his hands on his eyes, exclaiming, "But my eyes, by the mass, ye lie not a whit!"

At a late trial at Guildhall, between a buckle maker plaintiff, and one of the same trade defendant, on an encroachment made on a patent which the former had obtained. Mr. Erskine, as Counsel for the plaintiff, displayed much rhetoric on the rapid improvement of the art, and mentioned the invention of his client as entitled to public praise, and of course to the protection of the law; in conclusion looking at his own buckles, which were of the new pattern, he exclaimed with the warmth of a sincere advocate—"So elegantly are these ornaments constructed, that were our ancestors to rise from their graves and happen to observe my legs, how would they be surprised!"

"Very true, my learned brother," cried Mr. Mingay, who was Counsel for

the defendant, "they would be much surprised indeed to find you had got either shoes or stockings!"

A Lady starting at a noise while sitting at her harpsichord, surrounded with music books on the floor, enquired what was the matter—"Nothing," replied a gentleman who stood behind her, "but my *Cane* has fallen upon your ladyship's *Abel*."

The famous *Bub* Doddington, during the administration of the late Earl of Chatham, was appointed on an embassy to Holland. The Ambassador, on this occasion, lamented the conciseness of his Christian name, as, according to the customs of the Dutch, he would, in consequence of this misfortune, not to be looked on as a man of consequence. Lord Chatham said, this objection was easily obviated, and advised him to add *Silly Bub* Doddington!

Some young libertines, who had abused *Pyrrhus* when in their cups, were saved by a stroke of humour. The King sent, for them the next day to punish them for their intemperance; when, being reproached for their misbehaviour, "Truly," replied one of them, "if our wine had been exhausted, we should have done worse, we should have assassinated you!"

A bad painter having turned physician, he was asked what made him change his profession—"I thought it best," said he, "to pursue that, whose blunders are bidden *under pain of death*."

A Lady once asked a French Ambassador who had resided a long time in Poland, whether it was true that the Polish ladies were as white and as cold as the snow which covered their plains; he replied "It is so true, Madam, that I have often caught cold by conversing with them!"

A Farmer going to the vicar of the parish to borrow a few bushels of corn, was told to take the key of the granary and help himself. But he soon returned and told the vicar there was none there—"It is your fault then," replied the pastor, "for if you had brought back what you borrowed of me last year, you would have found it there now."

Monsieur de Norcarnet, who made a common practice of abusing the fair sex, was one day amusing himself with enlarging on the favourite topic in the presence of Monsieur de Caubaque, when he maintained that there did not exist a woman who had violated the laws of modesty and virtue. "If this be true," said Monsieur de Caubaque, "you must then acknowledge you are a cuckold and a son of a whore!"

A poor French woman being advised to place two of her daughters in a convent, that they might become nuns. "My children," replied she, "are well disposed to take the veil, but, unfortunately, they are not old enough to make a vow of *celibacy*."

A Catholic priest preaching on Easter Sunday, said—"that our saviour at his resurrection appeared first to the two Mary's, that the important news of being first made known to women, might be spread with greater rapidity over the face of the earth."

The celebrated *Scarron* wrote a copy of verses, to which he prefixed a dedication in these words—"à *Gulienne, sienne de ma sœur*." To *Gulienne* my sister's bitch." Some time after, when he was about to collect his poems for republication, having quarrelled with his sister, he inserted among the errata—"Bon *Chien de ma sœur*." For my sister's bitch, instead of my bitch of a sister.

A common person, preached before a crowded congregation, it was remarked that every body shed tears except one peasant, who perceiving that he was not as much affected as the rest, gravely answered, "Because I am not of this parish!"

After a splendid dinner at the London Tavern, one day last year, the chairman gave the usual toast of the *Abolition*, an allusion to the royal brothers; when a certain city knight, who was present, when it came to his turn to give a toast, said with gravity, "Mr. Chairman, as we are giving public buildings I'll give you my house at Taunton!"

A Farmer

A Farmer told his wife that he was credibly informed that there was but one man in the village who was not a cuckold—"And who do you think that one is, my dear?" said he—"Faith, husband," replied the woman, "I can't for my life possibly think who that man can be!"

An officer being wounded in the head, by a musquet-shot, at the siege of Rochelle, the surgeons, who applied the first dressing, told him that the wound was very dangerous, and that they saw his brains. "Oh," said he, "gentlemen, take out a few of them, I beseech you, and send them to Cardinal Richelieu, who has told me a hundred times a day, that I *never had any brains.*"

A gentleman at Carthagea said one morning gravely to his friend, "Before I go to rest this night, the whole city will be thrown into confusion." This he himself occasioned by going home an hour before his usual time, to the no small vexation of his wife and her cortejo, whose precipitate retreat and unexpected arrival at his own house, occasioned the like confusion there; and thus, by successive and similar operations, was literally fulfilled the prediction of the morning.

The effect of music on the senses was oddly and wonderfully verified, during the late mourning for the Duke of Cumberland. A taylor had a great number of black suits, which were to be finished in a very short space of time—among his workmen there was a fellow who was always singing *Rule Britannia*, and the rest of the journeymen joined in the chorus—The taylor made his observations, and found that the slow time of the tune retarded the work, in consequence he engaged a blind fiddler, and placed him near the workshop, made him play constantly the lively tune of *Nancy Dawson*. The design had the proper effect—the taylor's elbows moved obedient to the melody, and the cloaths were sent home within the prescribed period.

Charles Fox told an insolent fellow, he would kick him to hell.—"If you do," said the other, "I will tell your father how you are squandering his money."

When Charles Bannister was gudgeon fishing with Mr. Wynn, at Wargrave, he addressed the boatman, "are you married?—Yes, your honour."—"Don't your wife scold you?—No, your honour, why should she?"—"Because you are *raking* all day!"

In the summer of 1786, as Mrs. Hitchcock's servant maid, of Crow-street Theatre, Dublin, was following her mistress on a cart to Cork, where she had gone a few days before, to join Mr. Daly's company, she was surrounded by three ruffians, on a mountain between Clonmel and Cork, who brutally ravished the poor creature: when she arrived at the theatre, the despoiled wench ran immediately to her mistress behind the scenes, and told the dismal tale; at the conclusion of the story, Mrs. Hitchcock, who was then dressed for the Queen in Hamlet, bridling up her head, exclaimed with much solemnity, in the language of Shakespear, "Aye, it had been so with us, had we been there!"

When the School for Scandal was performing at Drury-lane Theatre with uncommon applause the first season, Cumberland sat in the stage-box, and was observed never to smile at any of the good things which the author had put into the mouths of the scenic personages. When the comedy was concluded, he improperly remarked he was much surprised that the audience should laugh so immoderately at what could not make him smile. As there are social traitors in all circles, this sarcasm was conveyed to Sheridan, who very coolly observed, that Cumberland was truly ungrateful, for not smiling at the comedy, as he had seen a tragedy of Cumberland's, at Covent-garden Theatre, but a fortnight before, and had laughed from the beginning to the end!

When Sir Francis Bacon was newly advanced to the Great Seal, Count Gondomar came to visit him, and to compliment him on the honour con-

ferred on him. My Lord replied, that he was to thank God and the King for that dignity; but yet so he might be rid of the burthen, he could very willingly forbear the honour; and that he formerly had a desire, and the same continued with him still, to lead a private life. "Now," said Count Gondomar, "I will tell your Lordship a tale of an old rat, that would needs leave the world, and therewith acquainted the young rats that he would retire into his hole, and spend his days solitarily, and would enjoy no more comfort; commanding them, upon his high displeasure, not to offer to come in unto him. In obedience to this command, they forbore two or three days; at last one that was more hardy than the rest, incited some of his fellows to go in with him, and he would venture to see how his father did, for he might be dead. They accordingly went in, and found the old rat sitting in the midst of a rich Parmesan cheese!"—My Lord laughed; but his necessities, after that employment, accorded not with the fable.

Lord Lonsdale being lately about to enclose a large common which had been very beneficial to the surrounding poor, was one day, with the aid of his steward, casting up the expence of posts, railing, &c. when a Noble Lord, who was present, observed to him, That he was over doing the matter; for he need only to reckon upon posts, as all the neighbourhood would find him railing!

In Queen Elizabeth's time, when tilts and tournaments, and running at the ring was much in fashion, there came a gentleman dressed in orange tawny, and ran extremely ill; the next day he came again arrayed in green, and ran still worse; when one of the lookers on asking another, "What is the reason that this gentleman changes his colours?" "Why," answered the other, "I think because it may be reported that the gentleman in the green ran worse than the gentleman in the orange tawny."

Lord M****d, of rotten finances, one day ordered a hat for the celebrated Bob Barraty, of Leadenhall-street; it was to be sent home, and the bill with it. Looking at the total the next day, his Lordship was much surprised; and highly offended at the price; and immediately sent for Bob. "Pray Sir," says he, angrily, "what is the meaning of this unconscionable charge?"—"Why, My Lord," says Barraty, in that easy kind of way peculiar to him, "we citizens must balance accounts. If you do not pay me, then you cheat me; but if you should happen to discharge the bill, then—I cheat you!"

Philip the Second of Spain, was so remarkably even in his temper, that when he received news of the dispersion of his formidable armada, he coolly told the messenger, That he did not send out his ships to fight with the winds!

A certain nobleman, who keeps a very large retinue, was one day, not long since, told by his steward, that much of his expence was very burthensome, and indeed useless; for that his Lordship needed not so many servants: whereupon he ordered his steward to bring him a list of all his servants, and to mark down their names; which the frugal steward did, putting out above half his Lordship's retainers. When this scroll was presented, the Nobleman asked him why he marked so many out? "Because, Sir," says he, "they are of no use to you." "Then," said the Noble Lord, "if the other must stay, because I have need of them, these shall stay because they have need of me."

During the time of General Bellisle's confinement in Windsor Castle, as a party of soldiers were marching there, to be set as guards over him, a gentleman meeting them on the road, asked where they were going, and upon what business? when one of the officers, fond of punning, replied, "We are going to Windsor to keep a *General fast*."

An officer, singing a song, who was perfect in neither the words nor air, requested Edwin to help him out:—"Surely, Sir, you are out enough already," said the wit.

Milton was asked by a friend, whether he would instruct his daughters in the different languages? to which he replied, "No, Sir, one tongue is sufficient for a woman."

A man whose wife, a perfect virago, had been drowned one night in a river near his house, was observed soon after searching for her the contrary course of the tide! Some persons remarked the improbability of his finding her that way; but he answered, that they were not in the least acquainted with her humour; adding, that as, during the whole course of her life, she went in direct opposition to the rest of the world, if other bodies were sure to go with the tide, she in conformity to natural principles, would still be as sure to go against it!

Judge Burnet, son of the famous Bishop of Salisbury, when young, is said to have been of a wild and dissipated turn. Being one day found by his father in a serious humour, "What is the matter with you Tom?" said the Bishop; "What are you ruminating on?" A greater work than your Lordships History of the reformation," answered the son. "Ay! what is that?" said the father. "The reformation of myself, my Lord."

A drunken fellow having sold all his goods to maintain himself at his post, except his featherbed, at last made away with that too; when being reproved for so doing by his friends; "Why," said he, "I am very well, thank God, and why should I keep my bed."

When Sir Thomas Moore was Ambassador for Henry the eight to the Emperor of Morocco, the morning he was to have an audience, he called for a bumper of sack, drank it, and asked for another; the servant would have dissuaded him from it, but could not: he drank that off, and afterwards a third, he then insisted on a fourth: but being over persuaded by his servant, he let it alone. When he returned from his audience, "You rogue," said he to his man, "what mischief have you done me? I spoke so well to the Emperor, on the inspiration of the three glasses I drank, that he told me I was fit to govern three parts of the world:—Now, you scoundrel, had I drank the fourth glass, I had been fit to govern the whole world."

A gentleman who had a numerous family, observing once at a table, that thank God he could digest any thing; another asked him how he digested his ten children? "Oh, Sir," said the gentleman, "I bring them up."

The wife of the landlord at the Carteret's head, Dublin, having offended one of his best guests, when Edwin was present, the man swore that were it not for the strangers, he would kick her out of doors.—"Oh, pray don't make strangers of us," said the wit.

Servilius Geminus, supping with Lucius Mellius, a famous painter in Rome, and seeing his children deformed, said, "Mellius you do not make as you paint." "No," answered he, "I make by night, but paint by day."

A Lord-Mayor waiting upon King Charles the Second, who happened to be in the Park feeding the ducks with his hat in his hand, the Mayor desired he might not speak till his Majesty was covered! "Phoo, phoo," says the King, "you may go on very safely, 'tis to the ducks I pull my hat off."

A Gentleman who assisted the Count de Cabra in putting on his armour before a battle, perceiving him tremble, asked what could cause this emotion in a man of such known bravery? The Count answered, "My flesh trembles at the danger into which my soul will lead it."

A certain Bishop had a Biscayan man-servant, whom he ordered one festival to go to a butcher, who was called David, for a piece of meat, and then come to church, where the Bishop was to preach. The Bishop, in his sermon, bringing authorities from the scriptures in this manner; "Isaiah says thus; Jeremiah says thus;" at last happening to turn towards the door, as his servant came in, he went on, "and what says David? Upon which the Biscayan roared out, "He swears to God, that if you don't pay your bill, you need never send to his shop again."

Charles

Charles Fox, about eight years ago, was so much involved in his circumstances, that his creditors seized his goods, and carried away even his chairs and stools, so that he had nothing to sit on. About a fortnight after, he was met by a friend, who asked him how he did? "Not very well," says Charles; "how can it be expected, for I have not had a stool this fortnight."

A Gentleman complained that his watch had been stolen at night; Edwin expressed the following impromptu on the occasion:

"He who a watch would carry, this must do,
Pocket his watch, and watch his pocket too."

A Nobleman desirous of have a scripture history-pieces painted in his staircase, sent to one of the fraternity of the brush, questioning: "What he thought would be most proper?" His answer was, "The children of Israel passing the Red Sea." The Nobleman approved of it much. The next day he observed the painter had daubed the wainscot entirely with red paint, on which he said it was quite the colour of the Red Sea. "But where are the children of Israel?" "Oh, my Lord," replied the painter, "they are passed through."

The Earl of Dorset having a great desire to spend an evening with Butler, the celebrated author of Hudibras, spoke to Mr. Fleetwood Sheperd, to introduce him. The three wits, some time after, accordingly met at a tavern, when, upon the first bottle, Butler was rather flat; on the second he broke out the man of wit and reading; but on a third relapsed into a tameness of conversation, very inferior to the author of Hudibras. Next morning Mr. Sheperd asked his Lordship how he liked his friend Butler? "I do not know any thing better to compare I'm to," says his Lordship, "than a nine-pin; little at both ends but great in the middle."

Some Gentlemen coming out of a tavern pretty merry, a link-boy cried, have a light, gentlemen? Light yourself to the devil, you dog, said one of the company. "Bless you, master," replied the boy, "I can find the way in the dark—Shall I light your worship thither?"

A remarkable eater, who piqued himself upon devouring as much as six other men could manage, was brought before Henry IV. expecting that monarch would make him a present to keep his chops a going. The King, who had heard of this hero of the platter, asked him, if it was true that he could eat as much as six? "Yes, Sir," answered he. "And do you work in proportion?" added the King. "Sire," replied he, "I work as much as any other of my strength and age." "Get along!" exclaimed the King, "had I six such as thee in my kingdom, I should cause them all to be hanged, to prevent a famine."

Dean Swift, in a journey from Drogheda to Navan, rode before the company, made a sudden stop, dismounted his horse, fell on his knees, lifted up his hands, and prayed in the most devout manner. When his friends came up, he desired and insisted on their alighting, which they did, and asked him the meaning. "Gentlemen," said he, "pray join your hearts in fervent prayers with mine, that I may never be like this oak-tree, which is decayed and withered at top, whilst all the other parts are sound."

A Prince, rallying the fatness of a courtier, who had served him in many embassies, said, he looked like an ox. "I know not," said the courtier, "what I am like; but I know that I have often had the honour to present you Majesty."

Edwin, in one of his excursions near the city of Bath, met with a wooden limbed soldier, who told him his tale of distress in an artless manner:—"How can you dare to beg?" said the player. "I have a licence, an please your honour." "Lice you may have, but sense I deny your having, to beg of an actor; but here, take this;—you want it, and I can spare it."

A noble

A noble Duke, who stammered so much, that he was obliged to have a servant stand by him to repeat what he said, asked a clergyman at his table, by way of joke, if he knew what was the reason that Baalam's ass spoke? The clergyman not understanding him, the servant repeated what his grace had said; to which the parson pleasantly answered, that Baalam stuttered, and his ass spoke for him.

A foreigner, during one of the dark days in November last, passing by a house of ill fame in the city, where two watchmen were stationed with a lantern on each side the door-post, enquired there also of so singular appearance. On being told that it was to deter the unwary from going in; he replied, with some energy—"By Gar! it be de only way to make dem go in! Dey be de only houses me can find my way into in de dark!"

The King Don Ferdinand lodged one night in the castle of Montilla, which Don Alonso de Augilar had furnished with much magnificence. The King going up a staircase too narrow for so grand a house, asked, why he had so little a staircase? "Sir," said Don Alonso, "I never expected to have so great a guest."

A wealthy person asked the philosopher Sadi, in derision, how it happened that men of wit were so frequently seen at the doors of the rich, and that the rich were never seen at the doors of the men of wit. "It is," replied Sadi, "because men of wit know the value of riches; but rich men do not know the value of wit."

Henry IV. of France, reading the following ostentatious inscription on the monument of a Spanish officer; "Here lies the body of Don, &c. &c. who never knew what fear was;" "Then," says the King, "he never snuffed a candle with his fingers."

A certain preacher having changed his religion for a good benefice, was much blamed by some of his friends, for deserting them. To excuse himself he assured them he should never have done it, but for seven reasons; being asked what they were? He answered, a wife and six children.

Fontenelle lived to upwards of one hundred years of age, and even at the last, had a turn of wit for almost every suitable occasion. A lady, of nearly equal years, addressed him one day in a large company,—"Monsieur, you and I stay so long, I have a notion Death has forgot us!" "Speak as low as you can, Madam, replied Fontenelle, "lest you should remind him of us: the proverb says, the sleeping lion must not be roused."

A charitable divine, for the benefit of the country where he resided, caused a causeway to be begun; and as he was one day overlooking the workmen, a certain nobleman passing by, said, "Well, Doctor, for all your pains and charity, I don't take this to be the high-way to heaven." "Very true," replied the Doctor; "for if it had, I should have wondered to meet your Lordship here."

A dispute happening between two officers, on board a vessel whose crew were a mixture of Irish and English; in the course of the contest, one of them contended, that the English could not answer a common question with half that propriety natural to the Irish. A bet being proposed, it was agreed to try the question immediately. An Englishman was asked, what he would take to go up aloft blindfold in a hard gale? I would take a month's pay, said the fellow. "And what would you take, Pat?" said one of the officers to an Irishman. "By Jafus!" said he, "I would take nothing—but *fast-bold*!"

Andrea Marteneti, a celebrated painter, portrayed, by order of Innocent VII. the four cardinal virtues, with the opposite vices. The Pope not rewarding him as he expected, he said, "Holy Father, shall I paint one more vice, called Ingratitude?" "Yes," answered the Pope, "if you add another virtue, called Patience."

A Miser

A Miser being called upon by an acquaintance, in order to avoid the expence of entertaining him, told the servant to answer, that nobody was within; according to which the girl said, that her master was out, and that there was not a soul in the house besides herself; to which the visitor, who saw penurious, peeping through the window-curtains, said, loud enough to be heard by him, "Well, my dear, I know no reason to disbelieve you; for, except yourself, I see nobody but your master; and he, every one knows, has no money."

Mr. Moore, the author of many ingenious pieces, being a long time under an expensive prosecution in Doctor's Commons, for marrying two sisters, was called upon one morning by his proctor, as he was writing the tragedy of the Gamesters; the proctor having a leisure hour, Mr. Moore read him four acts of the piece, which were all at that time finished, which the former found himself so affected by, that he exclaimed, "Good God! how can you possibly add to this couple's distress in the other act?" "Oh! very easily," says Moore, "there I intend to put them both in the Spiritual Court."

During the time Mr. Pilon was paying his addresses to Miss Drury, he was met by an old acquaintance who lived in Covent Garden, whose sister he had formerly courted; and in the midst of their conversation, the gentleman took an opportunity of telling Pilon, that his sister was much surprised at his long absence from their house! To this the wit replied, That he had paid his addresses to Covent Garden some time; and now, in return, felt himself inclined to pay his addresses to Drury!

A jolly young ear, after returning from a voyage for logwood, having made rather too free with a plank belonging to the owners of the vessel to which he belonged, was taken before a Justice, and accused of the theft. On being asked what he had to say in his defence, replied, "That, after having assisted to steal a whole shipload from the Spaniards, it was d—d high that he could not have a plank for his own use, without so much palaver!"

F I N I S.

A charitable divine, for the benefit of the country where he resided, engaged a countryman to be his agent; and as he was one day overlooking the garden, a certain nobleman passing by, said, "Well, Doctor, for all your pains and labour, I don't take this to be the high-way to heaven." "Very true," replied the Doctor, "for it had I should have wondered to meet you looking there."

A dispute happening between two officers, on board a vessel whose crew were a mixture of Irish and English; in the course of the quarrel, one of them observed, that the English could not answer a certain question with half that propriety as usual to the Irish. A hot debate ensued; it was agreed to try the question immediately. An Englishman was asked, what the world take to go up half blindfold in a hard gale? "I would take a month's pay," said the fellow. "And what would you take?" said one of the officers to the other. "I would take nothing—but say."

Another Mariner, a celebrated painter, was once of Innocent VII. the four cardinal virtues, with the opposite vices. The Pope not rewarding him as he expected, he said, "Holy Father, shall I paint one more and called Innocent?" "Yes," answered the Pope, "if you and another virtue called Patience."

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